

ADDENDUM REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE 22nd APRIL 2010

Item: 05

Site: Former Ark Royal Public House, Devonport

Ref: 09/01910/FUL

Applicant: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

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Further Highway Authority Consultation Response

Further to the previous highway consultation response the applicant has now submitted further information in response to the concerns raised by the Highway Authority in respect of the loss of the car park and the level of car parking serving the development itself.

Loss of Car Parking

The applicant has now produced a Parking Assessment in order to address concerns raised regarding the loss of the car park.

The parking survey undertaken reveals that the car park is well-used by patrons of the Mecca bingo hall at the weekends (Saturday night being the peak) but less so during the week when it is regularly used by residents and local businesses.

Whilst the loss of the car park is regrettable (and something the Highway Authority would not want to endorse) it is noted that the use of the car park should be restricted to patrons of the bingo hall only and is not available for use by the general public. However as the use of the car park has not been monitored by Mecca Bingo (and the barrier at the entrance has not been in operation) the general public have continued to use it.

Furthermore the use of the car park by Mecca Bingo is subject to a lease arrangement which expires in 2014. Therefore were the lease to be ended prematurely (which would not require planning consent) there would be nothing to prevent the car park from being taken out of use.

In view of these circumstances I would suggest that it would not be possible for the Highway Authority to substantiate a valid highway recommendation of refusal of this application on the basis of a reason relating to loss of the car parking area. It is also noted that this car park does not feature in the PCC Parking Strategy document which highlights the location of all publicly accessible car parks within the City.

As well as determining the level of use of the existing car park, the parking assessment also looked into the availability of on-street kerbside parking within the area. This revealed that spaces were available in various locations within the immediate vicinity of the site (Raglan Road, St Nazaire Approach etc) and therefore these spaces could be utilised by patrons of the Mecca Bingo Hall. There is also an under-utilised public car park behind the Bingo Hall at Princes Street which could be used by Mecca Bingo.

It is noted that the Bingo Hall already has its' own dedicated members car parking area which provides 15 spaces and therefore the removal of the 'leased' car parking would not result in the premises having no dedicated off-street parking. Furthermore as there are other Bingo Halls located throughout the City it is likely that most visitors would live locally and therefore a reduction in the availability of parking on-site may encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, public transport etc.

Consequently I am content that the issue regarding the loss of the use of the car park by the Bingo Hall has been addressed.

On-Site Parking Provision

In addition to the loss of the car park my other concern relates to the lack of dedicated off-street car parking proposed to serve the Police Station, with just 4 car sharing spaces proposed (although this number could reduce to 3 as some spaces are below the required minimum dimensions).

Information provided on the current travel patterns of staff working at the Marlborough Street Police Station reveals that almost two thirds of all staff currently drive to the site. This high percentage is likely to be a result of the working shift patterns with the private car the only likely alternative for staff working late nights.

The applicant has confirmed that there will be an increase in the number of staff based at the new premises at Fore Street. On the basis of information provided by the applicant on staffing numbers and shift patterns, there would be a maximum daily demand for 24 staff parking spaces on the site. However with only 4 car sharing spaces proposed it can be seen that there is a significant shortfall in the number of staff car parking spaces provided compared to the number required.

The Police Authority have confirmed that staff will continue to be permitted to park their cars in the car parking area that currently serves Riverside Business Park, the use of which the Police currently pay for (this car park can currently be used by staff based at Marlborough Street).

However the long-term future of this car parking area serving the business park remains uncertain as it is currently subject to a separate planning application for 3 small business units

(app. no. 10/00191) and therefore the future use of this car park cannot be relied upon. Furthermore this car park is some distance from the site of new Police Station on Fore Street (involving a walk of almost 600m) and therefore it is unlikely to be used by staff particularly those working late evening shifts. I would suggest that such staff would be more likely to park on-street closer to the Fore Street site. Whilst visiting the Riverside Business Park as part of their application it was observed that the car park in question was never heavily parked and those vehicles that were parked there were usually commercial vehicles (vans etc) associated with the existing businesses on the site (not private cars).

Whilst the loss of the use of the existing Fore Street car park by the general public is regrettable but accepted (as there are not entitled to park there), its closure will

undoubtedly result in those residents/businesses having to park on-street in the area.

With virtually no dedicated car parking proposed for use by staff on-site and there being question marks over the long-term use of the alternative staff parking site identified at Riverside Business Park (the use of which also involves a lengthy walk), it is likely that staff working at the new Police Station would also park kerbside within the residential streets surrounding the site and placing further demands on the on-street parking situation within the area to the detriment of local residents.

It is the view of the Highway Authority that the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policies CS28 and CS34 of the Core Strategy which refer to making a contribution towards meeting the car parking needs arising from the development. Therefore I would have to recommend that this application is refused for the following reason.

Transport recommends that planning permission is refused

Recommendation:

ZREF3 - Inadequate Provision of Parking

No adequate provision is proposed to be made for the parking of cars of staff working at the Police Station. Vehicles used by such persons would therefore have to stand on the public highway giving rise to conditions likely to cause:

- (a) Damage to amenity;
- (b) Prejudice to public safety and convenience; and
- (c) Interference with the free flow of traffic on the highway; which is contrary to Policy CS28 and CS34 of the adopted City of Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted April 2007.

Analysis

There is strong support for a new police station in Devonport and it is considered that the current proposal would result in a well designed, attractive building. However, the site is quite small and there has been a longstanding concern about the level of parking provided for staff. It was hoped that a staff travel plan would demonstrate that a reasonably large number of staff would be arriving at the site by sustainable transport methods (bus, cycling, walking etc) and that there would not be a significant displacement of staff parking onto adjoining residential streets which currently provide unrestricted on street car parking. Information on current staff travel patterns in connection with the existing Marlborough Street station indicates that approximately 2/3rds drive to the site. It is also envisaged that the proposed new station will accommodate additional officers.

The Highway Authority have endorsed concerns of the DRCP and a number of local residents about the levels of staff parking provided in connection with this proposed use. There is no opportunity to provide additional on site parking. Reluctantly this is accepted and the recommendation changed.

Recommendation

Changed to REFUSAL: REASON - INADEQUATE PARKING PROVISION (text as above)